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ABSTRACT

This 44-item bibliography presents annotations of video resources for the teaching of literacy that feature instructors who effectively put theory into practice--videos that portray literacy teachers and learners in action. To preserve the aesthetic integrity of individual videos produced as part of a series, individual videos are not classified into topical categories. Topics of videos in the bibliography include emergent literacy, reading comprehension, word identification, prewriting, English as a second language, collaborative writing, literature-based classrooms, and multicultural education. In addition to information on how to obtain the video and a detailed review, each entry in the bibliography presents classificatory information under the descriptor "suggested specific uses"--subject matter audiences for which the resource may hold special appeal and specific topic or problem areas about which the video may prove insightful. Videos in the bibliography were produced between 1984 and 1992, although not all videos indicate when they were produced. (RS)

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National Center for the Study of Writing

Occasional Paper No. 33-B

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James E. Lobdell
Sandra R. Schecter

September, 1993
Revised and Expanded: October, 1995

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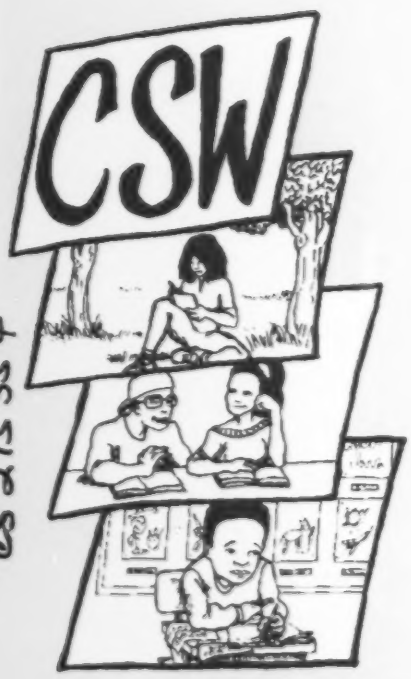

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University of California at Berkeley

September, 1993

INTRODUCTION

The impetus for preparation of this bibliography came from classroom teachers and teacher educators, most of them associated with the National Writing Project, who expressed the need for a listing of available video resources which can be used for pre-service and in-service education for literacy providers. In undertaking this review, our purpose was to identify video resources which feature instructors who effectively put theory into practice. To serve this purpose, we have opted to select tapes which most fully capitalize on the potential of the medium by portraying literacy teachers and learners in action. This criterion, in effect, eliminated from consideration many fine videos of lectures and talks by experts on literacy education.

Some explications concerning the organization and formatting of this document follow. Introducing each stand-alone resource is a blurb providing important practical information (who, where, how much) for those wishing to obtain the video. Where we review a number of videos within the same series, this background information is provided only once, preceding the first blurb of the particular series. Also, to preserve the aesthetic integrity of a work conceived and produced as a series, we were reluctant to undertake a systematic reclassification of individual videos into topical categories. For each entry, however, we have included what may be considered classificatory information under the descriptor "Suggested specific uses"; here we indicate subject matter audiences for which the resource may hold special appeal and specific topic or problem areas about which the video may prove insightful.

It should be noted that some videos—for example, those in the ESL series—are aimed at audiences with very specific areas of interest, while others target audiences with broad interests. None, however, assumes a great deal of prior knowledge on the part of viewers, which makes all suitable for diverse audiences of parents, school board members, administrators, beginning and experienced teachers in a wide range of disciplines, as well as for literacy professionals.

* * * * *

Teaching Reading: Strategies from Successful Classrooms. (1991). Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Available from Center for the Study of Reading, Dissemination Director, 51 Gerty Drive, Room 173CRC, Champaign IL 61820. Complete package of six videotapes, six viewers' guides, and one instructor's guide: $200; individual videotapes: $40 each.

This outstanding series of six videotapes presents actual lessons taught during the regular school day in six different classrooms around the United States. Teachers are portrayed as experts, and respect for them and for their students is evident in every aspect of the series. These videos present exemplary teaching and learning in classrooms that accurately represent the demographics of American education today: the students shown are diverse in race, cultural background, and ability levels, and their teachers respond by adopting and adapting instructional strategies and materials to accommodate that diversity. The teachers in all the classrooms believe in an integrated approach to teaching the language arts, emphasizing the connections among reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Throughout the series the importance of teachers sharing their expertise with one another is continually reinforced.

From the technical standpoint, these videos are virtually flawless. Voice-overs clearly and simply explain the whys and hows of what is happening on the screen, but without intruding on the all-important interactions among students and teachers. Four of the six tapes include a video Appendix in which an interviewer discusses classroom activities with the teacher. An effective teaching strategy in some situations may be to view the program and conduct a class discussion before viewing the Appendix. Viewers' Guides contain background material on schools, teachers, and students, together with responses to typical comments and questions from those who have previously viewed the tapes. Complete transcripts are provided, keyed to onscreen time displays, which makes finding a given segment in the program simple.

Following are brief descriptions of the six individual tapes:

"Emergent Literacy." Program: 33 minutes; Appendix: 10 minutes.

Hispanic students comprise 90% of this literacy-based kindergarten class in San Antonio, Texas. Books, signs, and writing materials are abundant throughout the room, and children are encouraged to use them in a wide variety of ways, both in teacher-structured learning situations and in their dramatic play. The teacher frequently models reading and writing activities, encouraging children to draw and print in ways that resemble writing, and then to read what they have written. Parent involvement in school activities is fostered through visits to the classroom and through newsletters and reports sent home on a regular basis. In the Appendix, the teacher, the school principal, and a university

researcher discuss what went on in the classroom, with the teacher providing further details on her overall plan for the school year and the kind of results she expects.

Suggested specific uses: For student and novice teachers, to demonstrate the need for and value of modeling the kinds of literacy behaviors one wishes and expects from students.

"Fostering a Literate Culture." Program: 35 minutes; Appendix: 15 minutes.

Fifteen third-graders in Danville, Illinois, are the stars of this video and, according to their teacher, "the stars of this school." These students have been classified as EMH (IQs range from 50-70), but teaching strategies are the same as for regular students, except that more time is allowed for learning so that students get lots of practice. The teacher frequently reads aloud to groups of 2-4 children, and students regularly read to each other during their independent reading time. The school's principal leads a Great Books Discussion Group one day a week, regularly visits both the library and the classrooms, and often stops by to read with students in this class. Writing usually begins with a whole-group prewriting activity, and in one sequence the teacher and her students build a "semantic web" on the topic of deserts. In drafting, children are allowed to work with partners, and they are encouraged to develop the habit of writing independently through the use of journals. Discussion in the Appendix focuses on the integration of reading and writing with the teaching of content area material. The teacher also emphasizes her strong belief that parents must develop the habit of reading with their children at home.

Suggested specific uses: For administrators considering adopting a "hands on" approach where they spend considerable time in classrooms working with teachers and children.

"The Reading/Writing Connection." Program: 39 minutes; Appendix: 16 minutes.

The African-American and Hispanic students in this Harlem second-grade classroom are shown learning to read and write in real-life situations that make the activities meaningful to them in personal terms. Although students often work in groups, they are not grouped by ability but on the basis of interests or friendships or for the purpose of specific learning activities, and groupings are always flexible. Children are encouraged to learn from each other, and the effectiveness of peer teaching is powerfully portrayed. Choral reading and speaking of stories and poems is a frequent practice, allowing students to develop a sense of the sounds and rhythms of language that help to foster fluent reading. The teacher has a shared reading period in her classroom, and in one sequence shares a piece of her own writing with her students. This practice fosters an atmosphere of mutual support for writing and involves students in the

process of how a piece of writing develops for a more experienced writer. Since the teacher considers parents' involvement with their children's learning a high priority, the Appendix features a discussion of how best to communicate to parents the reasons for classroom practices such as invented spelling, so that what parents do with children at home does not run counter to what happens in the classroom.

Suggested specific uses: For all teachers who are experiencing difficulty getting cooperative/collaborative learning groups to work effectively.

"Teaching Word Identification." Program: 40 minutes; Appendix: 10 minutes.

The Benchmark School in Media, Pennsylvania, is a private school for children in grades 1-8 who have had difficulty in learning to read. Most are non-readers when they enter the program, although their tested intelligence levels range from low-average to superior. The Benchmark Word Identification approach focuses both on reading as a meaning-getting activity and on the teaching of spelling patterns. "Teaching by analogy" employs a compare/contrast strategy to help students figure out new words by recognizing familiar spelling patterns within them. Many of the activities are game-like since this allows the teacher to provide a maximum amount of practice while maintaining a high level of student involvement. Although practice in decoding is considered fundamental, it is only a supplement to the school's total reading program. Children are also encouraged to read independently by providing them with a wide variety of books at appropriate reading levels. Teachers determine these reading levels on the basis of their knowledge of individual students and their experiences with students who have read these books in the past. Students also engage in a broad program of writing, speaking, and listening activities. A read-aloud literature program helps to introduce students to stories and genres they may later want to become more familiar with as they read on their own. A daily 40-minute writing period emphasizes journal writing on topics which students choose for themselves. In the Appendix, the classroom teacher and the director of the school, co-authors of the Word Identification Program, speculate about the reasons their approach has proven so effective with the student population they serve.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers and administrators who may feel the need for a more structured approach to literacy learning but who are wary of strategies that are too "programmatic."

"Literacy in Content Area Instruction." Program: 44 minutes.

Community involvement plays an important role in the learning that goes on in this third-grade classroom in Lansing, Michigan. The student population of the school is racially and ethnically diverse, with the majority of children coming from low-income, single-parent homes. The

teacher, to help children learn that books are not the only places to find what one needs to know, takes children on field trips and invites community representatives into her classroom. In a unit on communication, visits to a newspaper and radio and TV stations, as well as visits from local media personnel to the school are highlights. Also featured are two high school students who perform their own rap songs and explain to the third-graders how they do research for the lyrics they write. There is even a "video-within-the-video" when students make a tape to send to their pen pals in California. Small cooperative learning groups are a regular part of instruction, and students are allowed to choose their own groups, although the teacher insists that groupings be heterogeneous. The Viewers' Guide explains that assessment is often done through the use of portfolios, which allows the teacher to evaluate the contributions made by individual children to the overall achievement of a group.

Suggested specific uses: For parents and other community members, to encourage/improve their involvement in schools as partners in their children's education.

"Teaching Reading Comprehension: Experience and Text." Program: 34 minutes.

Kamehameha Elementary School in Honolulu, famed for the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), is the location of the classroom featured in this video. These third-graders are Polynesian-Hawaiian children, and some are also part Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, or Filipino. The special reading program shown was developed to make instruction as responsive as possible to the children's cultural background. The "talk story" style of interaction which children are accustomed to in their lives outside the classroom is encouraged by the teacher as part of learning activities in class. Students frequently speak without being called on, and several often speak at the same time. This approach may seem inefficient to outsiders, but it has significantly improved these children's performance in school. The tape includes highlights of a four-day reading lesson, and demonstrates the ways in which the teacher works to integrate information from the book with the children's own experience. (The entire text of the book used is included in the Viewer's Guide.) The Experience-Text-Relationship method is used to make children aware of the kinds of thinking required in reading comprehension, the ultimate goal being that they learn to operate independently with these skills. At the end of each day's lesson the teacher is interviewed by one of KEEP's originators about key events or strategies that were observed during that session.

Suggested specific uses: For all teachers of culturally diverse students to emphasize the necessity for adapting teaching strategies to the learning styles students bring from their home and community backgrounds.

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"Emergent Literacy: Kindergartners Write and Read." (1988). Produced for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory by Gardner Communications. Available from Agency for Instructional Technology, Box A, Bloomington IN 47402-0120. Videotape and teacher's guide: $150. 30 minutes.

This award-winning video shows kindergartners engaged in the kinds of literate behaviors that often precede learning to read and write. Drawing, non-phonetic letter strings, scribbles, phonetic letter combinations, invented and conventional spelling are all encouraged in this classroom as children who say they "can't write" because they "don't know all those words" create their own stories and then read back what they have written. The importance of social interaction during the writing process is clearly demonstrated as these children work together and share their stories with each other. The technical quality of the video is excellent so that the various strategies which different children use for writing and for reading are clearly observable. Techniques for teachers in structuring lessons around "circletime," "writing at tables," and "reading in the author's chair" are demonstrated onscreen and described in the comprehensive teacher's guide.

Suggested specific uses: For use in both pre-service and in-service contexts, to demonstrate that different children learn to be literate in different ways.

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The following four videotapes were produced by the Fairfax County Public Schools as staff development aids for teachers learning to use a process approach to writing instruction. While the technical quality of these videos is not as high as those produced commercially, the strongly practitioner-oriented focus of their content tends to compensate for this shortcoming. Available from the National Council of Teachers of English at $65 each ($49.95 for NCTE members). Each tape is approximately 30 minutes in length.

"Prewriting: The Preparation for Drafting in Primary Grades" (1984). Order No. 79118-1234.

The most important point made by this video is that, in order for students to develop as writers, they must be allowed plenty of time for thinking. Three different teachers demonstrate a variety of ways in which they help their students develop and expand their thinking in preparation for writing. These teachers encourage the kinds of talking and drawing that help children to clarify their ideas, and they model their own writing processes for their students. Drawing is considered a rehearsal for writing, and verbal interaction during the writing process is viewed as essential to the development and shaping of the writers' thought processes. Poetry,

literature and stories are used to stimulate children's thinking. This tape gives viewers the opportunity to watch three teachers, who all operate from the same fundamental theories about learning to write, putting these theories into practice differently through their distinctive, individual ways of working with children.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers unfamiliar with using the "writing process" approach, especially with younger children, this video provides a range of strategies which encourage them to experiment and vary their writing instruction principles and practices.

"Prewriting: The Preparation for Drafting in Upper Elementary Classrooms." (1984). Order No. 79088-1234.

A fourth-grade teacher shows how she uses *Charlotte's Web* and the theme of friendship to help students generate ideas for writing. Brainstorming ideas about friends leads to webbing and the webs serve as guides for children's first drafts. In a sixth-grade class, fables from *The Canterbury Tales* are used as guides for figuring out the characteristics of the genre. Students then do a group-write of fables, which in turn leads to the writing and illustration of their own individual stories.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who question whether the "writing process" approach does a disservice to the teaching of literature.

"The Writing Conference: An Effective Way to Help Children Revise Their Writing." (1984). Order No. 79975-1234.

Revision is defined as a re-seeing which enables the writer to change, clarify, and refine what she or he has written. A second-grade teacher models the process with her own writing. Before she reads what she has written to the children, she carefully sets the purpose for listening by explaining what she would like them to listen for. Then she reads the piece aloud and encourages the children to ask for clarifications and expansions of information where they feel these are needed. A fifth-grade teacher uses his own writing—a piece on "historical events"—to model the revision process, then students work together in small groups. One of the realizations they come to, entirely on their own, is that writing about history requires finding out a lot of factual information.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers or student teachers who need or seek help making effective use of peer workshop groups in writing revision.

"Celebrating Children's Writing: How It Happens." (1985). Order No. 76747-1234.

This tape highlights ways in which children can be motivated to write through the publication of their writing in attractive, impressive formats.

Some of the schools have publishing centers staffed by parent volunteers who work with children to help them design and produce their books. Other schools provide carts loaded with materials for publishing that roll from room to room as needed, so that teachers and students can work together in producing their finished books. An editing/proofreading mini-lesson shows some of the final stages in preparing a manuscript before it "goes to press." Strategies demonstrated are sentence-combining, punctuation of dialogue, and correction of spelling errors.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers, administrators, school board members, and others who are not certain of the value of publishing students' writing and fear that it may be too costly or not "cost-effective."

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Classroom Roles of the English as a Second Language Teacher. Iowa State University. Available from the National Council of Teachers of English at $65.00 each ($49.95 for NCTE members).

The six videotapes in this series are aimed at audiences of ESL teachers, educators of ESL teachers, and supervisors of ESL programs. The conceptual framework of presenting the various approaches in terms of the role played by the teacher in each helps to focus viewers' attention on the outstanding features of each approach. This format also illustrates the ways in which individual techniques inevitably overlap, thus encouraging teachers to make use of a wide variety of strategies. Technically, these tapes are very competently done, although not as "slick" in appearance as some of their commercially-produced counterparts.

"ESL: The Teacher as Parent." Order No. 71915-1234. 30 minutes.

The teacher in this pre-school program provides a comfortable, secure setting for her students and structures activities which call for a lot of physical participation, associating words with movement and gestures. The teacher alters the language she uses in working with children in many of the same ways parents do when children are learning their first language. Recognizing that some of these children's parents are illiterate in their native language, this program not only teaches English but works to prepare students for further schooling. The approach is carefully structured, but within that structure there is much permissiveness, so that students feel supported without being pushed. An important condition of this permissiveness, however, is that students not be allowed to isolate themselves from the rest of the class. The teacher briefly describes the program's development from its origin in a child care facility for parents taking ESL classes, then explains the pedagogical principles which underlie its operation.

Suggested specific uses: For beginning ESL teachers and also for regular classroom teachers who may feel underprepared for dealing with non-native speakers of English in their classrooms.

"ESL: The Teacher as Mentor." Order No. 71907-1234. 18 minutes.

The pullout program presented in this tape is oriented around a mentor-novice approach in working with third through seventh graders. Since students at different levels have different needs, teachers who act as tutors focus on tailoring each mentorship to the needs of the individual. Both mentor and novice participate in the same activity, each at his or her own level. One of the teachers is interviewed about the philosophy which guides the program. Pupils are always accepted where they are and respected as individuals with varied abilities and needs. Great emphasis is placed on the need for mentors to earn the trust and respect of the novices in order to guide them effectively in learning English.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers in and administrators of pullout ESL programs, to demonstrate beneficial application of one-on-one instruction.

"ESL: The Teacher as Consultant." Order No. 71869-1234. 18 minutes.

The teacher of an intermediate-level college class in Scientific English lays out a problem-solving activity for his students, one which will require them to work collaboratively and also allow them to function with the maximum degree of independence from him. As they are working, he answers their questions or provides guidance only when such response is absolutely necessary for students to complete the task. One group of students is shown building an object and writing instructions on their procedure which another group is then asked to follow. The focus of the activity is always on successful completion of the task, never on correction of pronunciation or usage. After the second group has constructed the object, they comment on what was good about the first group's instructions. The teacher provides a clear explanation for viewers of what/how/why he teaches as he does.

Suggested specific uses: For ESL and other teachers, to demonstrate effective ways of using cooperative/collaborative learning strategies with students from different language backgrounds.

"ESL: The Teacher as Conductor." Order No. 71850-1234. 22 minutes.

The teacher in an intensive, beginning-level college ESL class demonstrates behaviors and techniques for eliciting correct words, forms, and pronunciations when students' vocabularies are still very limited. She combines visual aids with movements and gestures such as those used in playing charades and miming, making frequent use of humor in

correcting students' errors. Starting with drills, the teacher carefully orchestrates the move to real communicative situations, in which students talk about what they know best—themselves and the artifacts of their own lives.

Suggested specific uses: For ESL teachers who are concerned with rendering non-native speakers proficient as quickly as possible but without adopting "saturation" techniques.

"ESL: The Teacher as Guide." Order No. 71877-1234. 27 minutes.

An intermediate-level reading class teacher at the college level works to build on students' real-world knowledge in expanding their linguistic competence. Using slides of scenes in a McDonald's restaurant, she helps students identify familiar items and read the words associated with them. Her corrections are never overt and are always designed to guide students toward self-correction and peer-correction. Before asking them to read, the teacher provides them with focus questions to think about while they are reading. Frequently her after-reading questions require students to scan for the names, numbers and other information they have been guided to by those pre-reading focus questions. One of the teacher's major goals is to help students develop reading strategies that they can use successfully for studying on their own.

Suggested specific uses: For ESL and other teachers, to remind them of the importance of building on students' real-world knowledge and skills in helping them to master the skills required of them in schools.

"ESL: The Teacher as Integrator." Order No. 71885-1234. 17 minutes.

A group of advanced ESL graduate students participate in a "treasure hunt" at a museum. The wide range of speaking, listening, and note-taking skills that they are required to utilize fosters the integration of activities in a number of different realms: real world and classroom, verbal and physical, oral and written, structured and free, simple and advanced. The teacher both designs the parameters of the treasure hunt and also acts as a facilitator during its progress.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers interested in a "whole language" approach to second language learning.

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The following two videotapes, each with an accompanying instruction booklet, are extremely well done, both technically and in terms of the quality of instruction they offer. Available at $225.00 from Wordshop Productions, 3832 North Seventh Street, Tacoma WA 98406. Additional instruction booklets are available at $3.00 each.

"Beginning Writing Groups." 30 minutes.

This video presents two student authors reading aloud short essays that they have written on the subject of racism, then receiving peer responses. Each essay is read twice. During the first reading, responders simply sit quietly and listen. When the reader finishes, listeners are given thirty seconds to jot down their overall impressions and reactions. Then the piece is read again. During the second reading, responders write continuously, recording the specifics of what they like or don't like, parts they don't understand, and points they question. Then each of the group members responds, in turn, without interruption, while the writer takes notes on what they say. At this point, with no further discussion, they move on to the next writer's essay. After the demonstration, members of the class talk about writing groups: how and why they use them, what they learn, and what they like about them.

Suggested specific uses: For use with students, teachers, and student teachers who have limited experience with the use of writing groups.

"Student Writing Groups: Demonstrating the Process." 35 minutes.

The process demonstrated in this tape is the same as that in "Beginning Writing Groups," but the writers are older, more experienced, and the single essay read and responded to is much longer and more sophisticated. In fact, the producers do not recommend this video for use below the Advanced Placement level in high school. However, the responders' comments are extremely insightful, and the process is demonstrated clearly and skillfully. A question-and-answer session between the workshop participants and a group of student observers occupies the last ten minutes of the tape, and this segment covers a number of important issues and concerns about the use of writing groups which may be shared by some of the video's viewers.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers and students in advanced writing classes, to demonstrate the whys and hows of peer revision groups.

* * * * *

The two videotapes described below are not strictly classifiable under the topic of literacy learning, but they deal with some of the most urgent social issues which surround language differences in America—issues which often have a powerful impact on the teaching and learning of literacy. Recommended for audiences from junior high through adults, each video is accompanied by an excellent instructional guide. Available from New Day Films, 121 West 27th Street #902, New York NY 10001.

"American Tongues." (1987). Purchase: $285.00; rental: $85.00. Standard Version: 56 minutes; High School Version: 40 minutes.

Regional, social, and ethnic differences in the way Americans talk are brilliantly portrayed, examined, and analyzed in this Peabody Award-winning video documentary. The attitudes Americans have about their own and others' speech, particularly the negative stereotypes and prejudices associated with certain regional dialects, foreign accents, and ethnic or social-class vernaculars, are depicted and discussed in very straightforward terms. The positive attitudes and social prestige that can also accompany many of our language differences are not overlooked, however. The video is technically flawless and artistically superior, but its most outstanding qualities are the powerful messages it conveys about the social, cultural, and political ramifications of the languages we speak. The Standard Version contains more than 10 minutes of material omitted from the national TV presentation. The 40-minute High School Version is abbreviated merely to accommodate shorter class periods and fully retains the spirit of the original. The Instructional Guide conveniently indicates material not relevant for use with the shorter version.

Suggested specific uses: For high school and college students and teachers and for community groups of all backgrounds, to demonstrate that to others, by and large, "We are how we speak."

"Yeah You Rite!" (1990). Purchase: $150.00; rental: $75.00. 28 minutes.

Many of the same virtues exhibited in "American Tongues" are also present in this superlative documentary on the rich and varied linguistic and cultural traditions of New Orleans. With its 50% black-50% white racial mix, New Orleans is also a linguistic potpourri of French, Spanish, African, Irish, Italian, German, and Slavic accents. The social issues that relate to language differences from one neighborhood of New Orleans to another are comparable in many ways to the regional variations observable at the national level. The divisive roles so often played by dialect stereotypes are nicely balanced in this program by the strongly positive roles that local ways of speaking can also play in binding together the many disparate cultural groups of the city. Contemporary New Orleans tends to celebrate, rather than to deplore, the richness of its ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social diversity. However, the program points out clearly that most black dialects are only considered acceptable by other blacks, and blacks who speak "proper" are not accepted within the black community. A distinctive feature of the video is that its narrator does not speak the "Standard American English" of most radio and TV announcers, but has a pronounced New Orleans accent.

Suggested specific uses: For the same groups and purposes as "American Tongues," but emphasizing additionally how ways of speaking affect social relationships.

Additions to the Bibliography

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University of California at Berkeley

October, 1995

"Conferencing: In Quest of Independent Writers." (1988). Produced by the Anchorage School District. Available from National Council of Teachers of English at $65 ($49.95 for NCTE members). Order No. 76844-1250. 25 minutes.

Students and teachers in the Anchorage School District demonstrate the use of writing conferences in elementary and junior high classrooms. The introductory section briefly describes the process approach to writing instruction and includes such practical techniques as invented spelling and "The Author's Chair." The conferences demonstrate a variety of ways in which teachers can act as guides for students during different stages of the writing process. Conferencing for a wide range of purposes, including content, correctness, sentences, and paragraph structure is clearly illustrated. Emphasized throughout is the point that each conference must have a specific goal. Teachers use "progress sheets" to record the purposes and results of each conference, enabling them to track students' improvement and to plan future instruction. These sheets also effectively display students' progress for conferences with parents.

The overarching goal of successful conferencing is for students to become more aware of their own writing processes. This goal can be attained most effectively when teachers ask the kinds of questions which encourage students to articulate their own writing processes and which help them to "re-see" what they have written. The importance of ensuring that the writer retains control over what happens to a piece of writing is continually emphasized.

The video leaves one important question unanswered: What is the rest of the class doing while the teacher confers with individual students? Since beginning teachers are the logical audience for this program, this question is bound to arise and needs to be answered. On the other hand, the video's principal message comes through clearly: conferencing can make a big difference in students' writing and provides teachers with the opportunity to make a significant difference in how students feel about their writing.

Suggested specific uses: For pre-service or beginning elementary and middle school teachers who are interested in exploring ways to individualize writing instruction and who want to make their responses to student writing as helpful as possible in very specific terms.

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"Collaborative Writing: Workshop." (1990). Produced by Indiana University at Indianapolis. Available from National Council of Teachers of English at $99 ($79 for NCTE members). Order No. 71109-1288. 57 mins.

In numerous "real world" settings, particularly in business and industry, collaboration is a natural and often essential means of getting jobs done efficiently and well. However, collaboration has not been widely used in schools until fairly recently. Many of the advantages and some of the difficulties which teachers and students may experience in using collaborative writing workshops are demonstrated effectively in this program.

The most important goal of collaboration is to help students to develop a wide repertoire of writing strategies. In addition, students who work in collaborative groups receive authentic and immediate feedback from a specific real audience other than the teacher, which tends to make collaboration a powerful tool for developing and refining the substance and style of their writing. However, careful advance planning is essential in order for collaborative groups to function effectively: both teachers and students must have specific goals in mind before deciding that collaboration is the best strategy for use in a given instructional context.

Most of the video's screentime is devoted to four university students who model a variety of techniques which can be used for a wide range of purposes by writers working collaboratively. Each student takes a single paper through a series of drafts, from the initial idea-generating session until it is ready to be handed in, demonstrating a number of response strategies which may be useful at different points in the writing process.

The expert commentary which explains, analyzes, and provides continuity for the on-screen activities is extremely well done. Discussion by several instructors at the conclusion of the program indicate that collaboration works well for many students, but that for some collaboration never becomes a useful strategy. They also point out that collaboration requires special classroom management strategies not required by more presentational approaches to instruction, but these strategies are not described or demonstrated in the video.

The accompanying Instructor's Manual, however, provides a number of suggestions for teachers on how to plan for successful collaboration, including ideas for classroom management. The manual also contains the script for the audio commentary, a real asset in planning classes or teacher workshops around the video. Built-in pauses occur at three points in the tape, and the manual provides helpful suggestions about the kinds of questions and topics which might be productive for discussion during each. An annotated bibliography of further readings is appended to the manual.

Suggested specific uses: For in-service teachers who may have experienced problems with using writing groups in the past; for pre-service teachers, to introduce the concept of collaboration and to demonstrate the effective use of

groups; for college students and more mature/capable high school writers, to model some of the ways in which collaboration may help them to improve their writing.

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"Managing Literature-Based Classrooms" (1987). University of Wyoming. Available from National Council of Teachers of English at $49.95 ($39.95 for NCTE members). Order No. 72725-1288. 33 mins.

Students in first, third, and fifth grades are shown in classrooms where skills are taught and learned through literature, using books and stories chosen specifically with them in mind. Basal readers or textbooks written for "generic" students are strictly off-limits. Because the selection of materials and strategies is carefully tailored to the interests and abilities of each group of students, every literature-based classroom is different; however, certain characteristics are common to all. Peer interaction is always emphasized so that students can give and get feedback on their reading and writing from classmates as well as from the teacher: whole-class activities allow students to share their ideas and feelings in a supportive environment; small-group activities allow teachers and children to focus on specific topics and to practice particular skills in depth.

The video effectively portrays students at all three grade levels engaged in a variety of prereading, reading, and postreading activities. At the end of the program, the teachers whose classrooms and students appear in the video discuss the advantages of the literature-based approach as well as some of the most common problems teachers encounter. All of them agree that most students in literature-based classrooms become more enthusiastic about reading and about school in general. Comprehension levels go up because children get more involved with books that appeal to their interests. They also become more active readers, setting their own purposes for reading and asking their own questions about what they read. In addition, parents tend to become more involved in their children's education, often reading and discussing books with them on a regular basis.

However, these positive aspects of the approach involve a trade-off. Planning, preparing, and coordinating meaningful independent activities for students who are not involved in small-group discussions is time-consuming. Classroom management in general presents new and sometimes formidable problems. The integration of skills and curricular objectives into the literature program for accountability purposes is a continual challenge. Therefore, these teachers recommend starting slowly, with a single book, to try out the literature-based approach in a manageable fashion. They also admit that some teachers and students do not find the approach workable. In the end, what seems most important about literature-based classrooms for these teachers and their students is the fact that the program genuinely belongs to them.

Suggested specific uses: For experienced teachers in search of alternatives to the basal reader/textbook approach, especially those for whom helping students to become lifelong independent readers is a priority.

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"Using the Primary Language Record." Available from Heinemann. Purchase: $150 (Order No. 08579); Rental: $50 (Order No. 08580). 33 mins.

The *Primary Language Record* was created by teachers in Great Britain to provide a convenient, detailed, and systematic means of observing and recording children's progress in language and literacy development during the early years of schooling. However, putting the *PLR* into practice requires major adjustments for most teachers and students, so the video wisely includes extensive classroom footage of the *PLR* in action.

All aspects of each child's language use are observed and charted as part of the *Record*, through general observations as well as through more tightly-focused analyses. The close interrelationships of all the language arts are emphasized and teachers are encouraged to recognize that development in one supports development in the others. In *PLR* classrooms, talking and listening are accorded equal status with reading and writing. Samples of the child's work are included, along with descriptions of the strategies which the child used and the contexts in which the work took place.

One of the *PLR*'s outstanding features is its provision for following multilingual students' progress in *all* their languages. One impressive segment of the video shows a girl reading in Urdu then translating what she has read into English as part of her teacher's assessment of her language development. This example also highlights the *Record*'s goal of creating a positive learning environment through emphasis on what children *can* do rather than what they *can't*. Involving students in the assessment of their own progress by means of periodic language and literacy conferences provides them with positive proof that their observations are valued by the teacher and encourages them to reflect on their own competence and accomplishments.

Conferences with parents, an essential element of the *PLR*, strengthen home-school links and enable teachers to gain insights into the child's language and literacy development outside school as well as valuable knowledge about the language(s) used in the home.

In the final segment, a group of teachers discuss the practical aspects of *PLR* use. For teachers who are considering its adoption, a central concern is always the amount of time required for making and recording the system's detailed observations. However, these teachers all agree that the only extra time they spend is on parent conferences after school: the *PLR*'s emphasis on close observation of individual children and methodical record-keeping leads teachers to change their practice in ways that make the necessary time

available. Most teachers find that using the *PLR* improves their practice and enhances the performance of their students.

Suggested specific uses: For primary-grade teachers interested in developing student-centered classrooms that maximize the potential for the development of individual students and who want to make assessment an effective means for improving instruction and learning.

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"Children as Authors, Children as Illustrators: The Whole Story" (1992). Available from Heinemann Educational Books. Purchase: $275 (Order No. 08754); Rental: $50 (Order No. 08755). 48 mins. Resource Guide: $4.50 each for 1-9 copies; $4.00 each for 10 or more copies.

Every child in this visually stunning video experiences the excitement of success as both writer and artist. As part of the process, they demonstrate a wide range of ways in which storymaking and illustration can be used as strategies for the teaching of writing. The two teachers who developed this strategy believe that writing and illustration are equally important aspects of their approach. The use of descriptive language helps to inspire illustrations and illustrations lead to more detailed descriptions in what the children write. Students discover that words can paint pictures and that pictures can tell stories. In addition, the quest to achieve an effective match between text and illustration helps to motivate the revision of both so that each enhances the other.

The highlights of this video are the children's intense involvement in the writing/illustrating process, their exuberant delight at the success of their efforts, and the mutual support, encouragement, and praise which they freely bestow upon one another. These kids are unmistakably impressed with their achievements and with themselves.

The accompanying Resource Guide contains an overview of the video and detailed instructions on how to perform each of the demonstrated illustration techniques, ensuring that even the least artistically inclined teacher can work successfully with this approach. General procedural notes and helpful advice are also included, along with a list of materials required and bibliographies of resource books for both children and teachers.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who want to accommodate a broad range of student learning styles and reinforce connections between the language arts and the visual arts. Although the video is aimed principally at teachers in elementary through middle school, many of the techniques could readily be adapted for use with older students.

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The Authoring Cycle: Read Better, Write Better, Reason Better. (1985). Developed and hosted by Jerome Harste, Indiana University. Available

from Heinemann Educational Books. Purchase of complete package of eight videotapes with Viewing Guide: $1450; individual videotapes: $195. Rental of individual videotapes: $50. Each video has a viewing time of approximately 30 mins.

Video's greatest strength as a medium for teaching and learning is its ability to *show* us what's going on, rather than merely *telling* us about it. The simplest test of how well a video utilizes the potential of the medium is to clock the amount of time during which the message can be grasped merely by *listening*, without needing to *watch*. By that standard, much of this series could be presented just as effectively on audiotape. Seven of the eight programs feature too many "talking heads" and not enough classroom scenes of teachers and students putting into practice what those heads are talking about. On the positive side, the talk is good and the heads belong to some of the leading authorities in the field of literacy teaching and learning. Unfortunately, voiceovers by these experts too frequently intrude on scenes of students and teachers working together and the camera too often cuts away from the classroom entirely to present an expert interpreting or analyzing what the students and teachers are doing.

However, each program in the series contains a segment called "Strategies" in which *showing* takes precedence over *telling*. Also in its favor, the high quality of production standards makes the series an attractive package, and these videos can provide a convenient means of access to research and theory for educators who are unable to see and hear such eminent authorities in person. The Viewing Guide provides a brief summation of each program's contents, a list of Key Points, and strategies for workshops designed to help teachers understand the practices recommended in the videos as well as the theoretical principles which underlie those practices.

"A Natural Curriculum." Order No. 08223 (purchase); 08281 (rental).

This program begins by discounting the widely held belief that while children can learn to speak and understand oral language on their own, they must be *taught* to read and write. This video contends that in an environment where reading and writing are seen as important, children will want to and *will* learn to read and write as easily as they learn oral language. Unfortunately, schools too often interfere with this natural process by fragmenting language into subjects—reading, writing, spelling, grammar—rather than adopting a holistic approach which emphasizes the unity of the language arts. Thus, reading becomes a process of sounding-out words rather than a meaning-making activity and writing becomes a series of skills and drills rather than a creative avenue for self-expression and the exploration of ideas. Teachers tend to focus on conforming children's learning to the requirements of a predetermined curriculum

instead of developing a curriculum from their discoveries about what students want and need to learn.

The "Strategies" segment portrays an activity called "Peanut Butter Fudge." Students and parents are given the recipe, ingredients, utensils, and equipment to prepare this tasty treat. The "catch" in the activity is that each of the directions for the recipe is printed on a separate index card and the cards are not arranged in the correct order. With no help from the teacher, members of the group have to figure out what to do first, second, next, so that they can complete the recipe successfully and get to eat what they create. The students become thoroughly engrossed in the process and eagerly work in collaboration to solve the problem.

Suggested specific uses: This video provides a simple, straightforward introduction to the whole language approach to literacy learning and teaching for pre-service and in-service teachers.

"The Authoring Curriculum." Order No. 08224 (purchase); 08282 (rental).

This video challenges the notion that poor/disadvantaged students can only do well under rigidly structured, carefully controlled learning conditions. In practice, this kind of approach actually makes learning more difficult for such students by distancing what goes on in the classroom even further from what they learn in their lives outside school. The guest experts recommend that teachers abandon such dysfunctional uses of language and devise activities in which reading and writing become essential tools for active learning. Assessment then becomes a process in which teachers look closely at how children function with language in order to make meaning, with particular emphasis on the development of each individual over time. As a result, understanding children's development depends less on the examination of what students produce in writing than on observation of students themselves as they read and write.

Three activities are demonstrated in the "Strategies" section. "Say Something" asks students to work in pairs on a given reading selection, pausing after they read each paragraph so that both members of the team can "say something" about what they've just read. The technique demonstrates that reading is a social activity and helps participants to develop new insights and interpretations through the sharing of their responses. "Sketch to Stretch" also encourages students' exploration of texts by asking them to draw pictures of their responses to what they read. The act of translating meaning from one medium into another provides a new freedom of interpretation, particularly for students who have trouble moving beyond the level of a text's literal meaning. "Choose Your Own Adventure" uses interactive texts in which students have to "read like authors," predicting what will happen next and making choices on the basis of their predictions.

The "Postscript" indicates ways in which teachers can provide support for the authoring cycle by helping students to feel like "real" authors, by showing them how "real" authors write, and by encouraging them to provide mutual support for each other as writers.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who want to discover varied strategies for encouraging their students to become independent readers and interpreters of text.

"A Classroom for Authors." Order No. 08225; 08283 (rental).

The notion that readers create texts in much the same way writers do supplies the theoretical underpinning for this video. Texts are viewed as open to interpretation rather than as fixed and immutable entities; good readers do not merely decode symbols on paper but interpret texts in order to make them personally meaningful. Thus, different readers should be expected and encouraged to interpret the same text differently. Similarly, writing is not merely a process of transposing thoughts to paper but involves the shaping and reshaping of ideas. Teachers should focus on the meaning-content of language rather than on formal correctness, particularly in the beginning stages of helping students to master written modes of communication. One of the video's major recommendations is that both writing and reading be taught throughout the curriculum rather than restricting instruction to "reading time" and "writing time."

The "Strategies" section illustrates three activities. In "Message Board," students write messages to each other and tack them up on a bulletin board. A child who receives a message then writes a reply. In this activity students write for real audiences and for authentic purposes. Since they are allowed to choose their own topics, they are also "assigning" writing to themselves and to each other. Teachers can also get involved in this communication process and use it as a means of guiding and encouraging the writing development of individual students. "Pen Pals" is valuable for many of the same reasons, except that the audience is non-present and feedback is not immediate. Journal writing, the third strategy, provides a safe place for personal expression through writing and fosters personal growth. In all these activities, students write because they *want* to, not because they *have* to. All three also encourage students to take risks and to find ways on their own to work through whatever problems they encounter.

The "Postscript" features a school principal who encourages teachers to be creative and to take risks, allowing them the freedom to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children. He also believes that teachers should be able to talk and work with each other as professionals, both as practitioners and as researchers.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who want to encourage their students to become actively involved in reading and writing in ways that the children themselves find personally meaningful.

"Taking Ownership." Order No. 08226 (purchase); 08284 (rental).

Writing instruction should begin with the writer, not with the curriculum. If we want children to write with *real* purposes in school, then they must be allowed to do writing that is based on their own knowledge, experience, and interests. This kind of writing requires teachers to take on new roles in which they confirm and validate what children write, rather than trying to direct or shape it, always allowing control over a piece of writing to remain with the writer. The teacher's goal is not to correct children's writing but to enable children to develop *self*-correction. Thus, teachers must allow students enough time so that they can develop and change a piece of writing according to their own dictates.

"Getting to Know You," the first activity in the "Strategies" segment, asks writers to interview each other preliminary to developing character sketches. In "Picture Setting" students select a picture, draw characters appropriate for that setting, then tell each other what they intend to do with those characters when they begin to write. "Extended Literature Activities" such as discussion and role-playing are designed to get students emotionally and physically involved with the texts they are reading or listening to, after which teachers ask students to predict what will happen next, so that writing grows naturally out of the reading and predicting activities which precede it.

Literature is the focus in the "Postscript." Learning to read and write requires lots of literature to provide students with inspiration, to help with idea generation, and to model various kinds of story structures and different writing genres. Literature in which children can find aspects of themselves and their lives is essential, especially for minority children who are too often asked to read about characters and situations with which they cannot identify. In fact, one of this video's major messages is that students should be *invited*, rather than *required*, to write.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who want to encourage children to interact with texts in new and different ways and for whom the development of students' self esteem is a priority.

"Author's Circle." Order No. 08227 (purchase); 08285 (rental).

Writing is a means for discovering what one thinks and for making sense of one's experiences. Writers learn and change as they use writing for these purposes. When they pause to reread, to reflect on, and to evaluate what they have written, writers come to understand more about themselves and what they think. Adopting the dual perspectives of both reader and writer seems to help students to grow and develop, to create new meanings out of their ideas and experiences. Reading what they have written aloud to others is a way to test how effectively their writing communicates. The "Author's Circle" strategy capitalizes on these aspects

of writing by providing a second audience for writers which is critical but also supportive. Listeners' responses are non-judgmental suggestions which the author may choose to follow or to ignore. Hearing others' responses helps writers learn how to shift their perspectives as readers of their own work so that revision truly becomes "re-seeing."

The "Strategies" segment suggests that some students may wish to read what they have written into a tape recorder, then follow along on their manuscripts as they listen to the playback. This activity offers many of the same benefits as "Author's Circle" but provides an added measure of protection for students who may be intimidated by exposing their writing to the criticism of others.

In the "Postscript" a special education teacher talks about his use of the "Author's Circle." He finds that activities which capitalize on the social nature of language learning, allowing and encouraging students to be resources for one another, are highly effective with his students. In fact, supporting language learners rather than intimidating them tends to work well with students at any ability level.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who want their students to use writing as a means for self-discovery and for exploration of their own ideas and feelings rather than merely as a means for satisfying academic requirements.

"Editor's Table." Order No. 08228 (purchase); 08286 (rental).

Focused on preparing pieces for publication, this program emphasizes the importance of postponing concern for "correctness" until the final phase of the writing process. Although the conventions of written language are always important to writers, a piece should be taken to the Editor's Table only when its content has become comparatively secure. Supportive editors who are reading a piece for the first time can often help the writer to find effective ways to clarify ideas and avoid confusion for readers.

In the "Strategies" section, helping students to learn the editor's code for corrections is presented as an opportunity to teach the conventions of written language within the context of a meaningful, purposeful task. Both editors and writers learn that conventions are not merely arbitrary rules but another means through which authors convey meaning to their readers. Editors must always bear in mind that the final decision about making changes to a piece of writing remains with the writer. Difficult or questionable changes, therefore, require consultation between author and editor. Through this kind of collaboration, students learn the conventions of written language from each other.

Discussion in the "Postscript" centers around the qualities that make for a good classroom: literacy activities which are authentic for students because they are based on children's rather than teachers' intentions. If a

genuine curiosity and desire to learn motivates students, the activities are authentic.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who understand the importance of teaching their students the conventions of written English but who want to avoid the use of decontextualized drills and exercises.

"Celebrating Authorship." Order No. 08229 (purchase); 08287 (rental).

Writing as a public act aimed at communication with others is the focus of this program. Because students learn more about writing when they read what others have written, publication provides important support for both reading and writing. Publication also celebrates the authoring process by honoring the writer's attempt to communicate, not merely the products of that attempt. In addition to the production of books, publication can take a number of other forms: classroom message boards or post offices, writing to pen pals or to request information, scripting and producing plays are some examples cited.

"Readers' Theater" is featured in the "Strategies" segment as another way of publishing student writing. Reading for purposes of performance requires students to think about a text in terms of its interpretive possibilities and how those possibilities can be communicated effectively to an audience. "The Author's Chair" spotlights student writers as *author*ities in their classrooms and allows them to learn more about their writing through others' responses to it. Reading their writing aloud can also provide inspiration for other writers. "Young Authors' Conference" brings student authors together with writers from outside the classroom to talk about writing and to share their writing with each other. This strategy is illustrated by a singer-songwriter who works with students to demonstrate how their writing can be set to music.

The "Postscript" features a "Reading Fair" which involved students, teachers, parents, and outside authors coming together to celebrate authorship on a grand scale. Students' books were featured alongside trade books and conference sessions were available for all participants, many of them aimed at helping parents to discover ways in which they could become more actively involved in their children's literacy learning.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers interested in expanding the audience for their students' writing in new directions, especially beyond the walls of their own classrooms.

"Extending the Cycle." Order No. 08230 (purchase); 08288 (rental).

If you can view only one program from this series, this is the video to see. This final presentation effectively summarize the major concepts which run throughout all the programs and avoids the "talking heads" syndrome by allowing the "Strategies" segment to take center stage. This impressive sequence focuses on an extended project which begins with

students' reading of a story by Pearl Buck and culminates in the children's publishing their own book about China. Minimizing interruptions by guest experts allows viewers the opportunity for extensive observation of the teacher and her students in action. These children's powerful intellectual and emotional engagement in their expanding search for knowledge becomes an almost palpable quality and the producers wisely allow us to feel that power.

This uninterrupted and uninterpreted footage provides highly persuasive graphic evidence that the best curriculum is not a set of prescribed "busywork" activities but an environment in which children use language to explore and extend their knowledge of the world. Watching students as they interview their own guest expert on China, listening to one girl as she phones the zoo for information about pandas, and seeing the excitement and absorption of all these children as they create a "Great Wall" to display what they have learned for the benefit of the whole school is more effective evidence by far than any number of words from experts analyzing the reasons for this project's success.

On the other hand, ending the series with an anecdote from a guest expert works very well. Donald Graves tells the story of a child who is asked to evaluate four books in his classroom. He values most the book which he wrote himself, after that the book written by his best friend, then a storybook, and last of all the class basal reader. When asked how his teacher would evaluate the same books, he places the storybook first, the basal reader next, his friend's story after that, and his own story last. He explains that when the teacher reads aloud to the class she most often reads from the storybook, sometimes from the basal, but never from books the children themselves have written.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers who want to try a discovery-oriented approach to instruction but who need graphic evidence of how well it can work and how to make it work well.

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Visions of Literacy. Designed and presented by Jerome C. Harste, Indiana University. Available from Heinemann Educational Books. Each videotape is approximately 30 minutes in length. Purchase: $195; rental: $50.

Designed as a companion piece to *The Authoring Cycle*, this seven-videotape series (an eighth video is planned for later release) aims at extending the same processes and strategies to new student populations and to curricular areas other than English/Language Arts. The real bonus is that *Visions of Literacy* avoids the major fault of its predecessor: the guest experts are still present but their presence is no longer intrusive. This series succeeds superbly in showing viewers how students and teachers work together effectively in classrooms which are structured to provide supportive learning environments. The emphasis is on action rather than analysis, and the

experts' opinions tend not to interpret the action so much as to invite interpretation by viewers and to suggest possible directions which those interpretations might take. In short, the use of the video medium in *Visions of Literacy* exemplifies the educational principles and practices advocated in the programs themselves.

"Literature Circles." Order No. 08552 (purchase); 08553 (rental)

The perception that reading is a social process in which readers first engage in "conversations" with authors and then talk about what they have read with classmates, friends, and family underlies the classroom strategy of "Literature Circles." The principal goal of this approach is to give students the opportunity to talk about books and to share their responses to what they read, with or without the teacher's guidance. In the past, reading was often taught primarily as something to be tested in order to determine students' comprehension levels, a practice which frequently turned students off to reading rather than helping them to become lifelong readers. Today, most teachers proceed from the assumption that children understand what they read at their own level. Teachers who use "Literature Circles" believe that when students continually challenge one another in discussing what they have read, testing for comprehension and retention becomes superfluous.

Literature Circles may take a variety of forms: all the students in a group may read the same book, students may read different books on the same topic, or students may read different books on entirely different topics. Whenever possible, children are allowed to choose their own books. The video portrays students in animated conversations about books both during reading and after they have finished. One outstanding segment focuses on students trying to decide the best way to do a presentation on the book they have read for other students who might want to read it—for example, through dramatic enactments of key scenes or promotional blurbs illustrated with artwork.

A closing anecdote told by Ken Goodman brilliantly exemplifies this video's message that literature should not be used to teach reading but to teach literature: a fourth-grader, after telling her mother about an extremely sad story she had read in the class basal reader, explained, "I was crying so hard I could hardly answer the comprehension questions."

Suggested specific uses: For teachers in search of ways to avoid the "basal reader syndrome" and who want to encourage students to become independent lifelong readers.

"Literature Guilds." Order No. 08776 (purchase); 08777 (rental).

Like Literature Circles, the underlying purpose of Literature Guilds is to bring readers together for the purpose of talking about what they have read. Because some teachers find it difficult to get students to talk about

their reading, this program suggests a number of ways in which conversations about literature can be encouraged. One means of accomplishing this is to create a literature-based curriculum in which students and teachers collaborate in planning class activities around reading. Children need to choose what they want to read for themselves, and teachers need to recognize that the personal experiences children bring to reading are essential to their enjoyment and understanding of what they read. This video discourages the teaching of reading merely as something to be tested by making a distinction between *readers* and *responders*: when children become personally involved with texts, they are readers; when they read with the knowledge that they will be tested on their comprehension, they are merely responders. Literature guilds are not test-driven but motivated by the social nature of language, encouraging students to explore and to speculate about what they read. Guilds form when several students choose to read the same book or when several children who read the same book decide they want to talk about it.

Literature-based classrooms foster conversations about reading through whole-class and small-group discussions of books and stories. Children are also encouraged to collaborate on artwork illustrating situations, events, and characters from their reading, to create dramatic presentations based on stories they enjoy, and to engage in research about subjects and authors that arouse their interest and curiosity. In literature-based classrooms, teachers ask children *real* questions, not *test* questions, about their reading. Real conversations about literature do not take place in classrooms where children always look to the teacher for the "right" answers about what they read.

The most impressive sequence in this video shows a group of absorbed and animated children having an extended discussion of Hautzig's *The Steppe*, both independently and in collaboration with their teacher, effectively illustrating how Literature Guilds can function within a literature-based curriculum.

Suggested specific uses: Teachers who want to find practical strategies for putting reader-response theory into practice with their students will find this video extremely helpful.

"Children at Risk." Order No. 08554 (purchase); 08555 (rental)

"Enabling rather than labeling" is the theme that runs throughout this program. Labels like "at risk" erect barriers for children by emphasizing what they *can't* do rather than what they *can* and invite teaching to students' weaknesses rather than building on their strengths. All children should be viewed as "learners with special needs," not merely those labeled "slow" or "remedial" or "handicapped." Similarly, all children are "differently abled," so teachers must discover what each child knows and can do, then help that individual to develop in the direction of her interests and potential. The tendency for educators to use the differences

among children as reasons for labeling and grouping them most often leads to their being treated as "different" only in the sense of "deficient." This approach leads in turn to the hierarchical ranking of children by the degree to which they deviate from the "norm." But differences can also be looked upon simply as differences, with teachers accepting and valuing their students' diversity. When this occurs, teachers place every child at the center of a curriculum designed especially for him, rather than placing a generic curriculum at the center of the classroom to which every child is expected to conform.

The heart of this video is an extended segment filmed in a "transition" class, made up of children who are not yet ready to enter a regular first grade classroom. Watching and listening to these students and their teacher as they work together is genuinely inspirational. Later, the teacher talks about the philosophy which guides his teaching and explains his rationale for the activities we observe. He believes that the kind of classroom he has created instills a power in his students that will enable them to be successful throughout their education as well as in their lives outside the classroom.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers in special education classes and in regular classrooms who are under pressure to move toward mainstreaming or inclusive education but whose experience and training have not prepared them adequately for such a move.

"Education as Inquiry." Order No. 08556 (purchase); 08557 (rental).

Whole-class instruction is based on the assumption that all children need the same kind of educational experience at the same time and that the outcome of education can be tested in the same way for every child. Education as inquiry (or "discovery learning") is grounded in the premise that the needs and interests of individual children should determine the nature of the curriculum as well as the way in which learning is assessed.

Theme Cycles are units of study which invite and offer opportunities for students to engage in genuine inquiry across the curriculum. Pursuing knowledge in the direction of their own interests, students become researchers and share in the planning as well as the carrying out of their own research. They also share the knowledge they discover by finding ways to present what they have learned to others. The teacher's role is not to instruct but to help students learn. Education as inquiry does not focus on learning *per se* but on the pursuit of new knowledge; learning is what takes place during that pursuit. Knowing, therefore, encompasses the entire process of discovery, not just the factual knowledge children acquire.

The centerpiece of the video is a segment which portrays students in a 4th/5th-grade classroom as they plan and carry out a unit of study on Ohio canals. At the beginning, students brainstorm the kinds of things they will need to research. Then individuals and groups follow up on the various

lines of inquiry in the areas they have identified. The quest for information sometimes brings the outside world into the classroom; at other times, students take their classroom into the outside world. For example, the author of a book which children were reading as part of their research visits the class to talk about the kinds of research she conducts as part of her writing. Later, students are shown on a field trip to a cranberry bog which presently occupies the site of some 19th-Century canal construction.

Frequently, students who are allowed to set their own research agendas discover that they need to know more than they originally thought and voluntarily extend their agendas, in effect assigning themselves additional work. Projects assigned by the teacher are seldom as motivating or as responsive to individual students' interests.

Suggested specific uses: Teachers who need concrete examples of how to implement the principles of discovery learning effectively in practice will find this video extremely helpful and inspiring.

"Early Childhood." Order No. 08558 (purchase); 08559 (rental).

Learning is the natural business of children. Active learners from infancy, they possess a great deal of knowledge about language before they enter school. Thus, teachers who recognize that children have this "jump-start" on language can build on what students bring with them from the world outside the classroom. If students have learned to read "naturally" from environmental print, teachers can structure the kind of classroom environment that will help them to continue their learning just as naturally. "Reading readiness" activities and "how-to" exercises in commercially-produced reading texts are unnatural because they do not take into account the way readers operate in real life. Encouraging students to become engaged in reading books and stories that they like and providing opportunities for them to talk and write about what they read is far more natural. The teacher's job is to create situations in which children will want and need to read and write as natural consequences of other learning activities in which they are engaged. This kind of "functional" literacy learning allows reading and writing to serve real purposes in children's lives.

"The Knowledge that They Bring" is a sequence which demonstrates children learning to read and write naturally in two different classrooms. In one, the teacher reads stories to her students, after which they talk about what they have read, asking questions and relating what they know from their own experience to the characters and events in the stories. As they talk about "Little Red Riding Hood," for example, the teacher asks them why "Red" doesn't recognize the wolf when he is disguised as Grandma, even though it's obvious to the children when they look at the illustration. The ensuing discussion shows the students excitedly applying their real-life knowledge to the working-out of this academic task. In the

other classroom, students are shown working on science projects, drawing and labeling diagrams as well as writing descriptions and instructions to explain how their projects work. These activities are collaborative so that students learn actively with and from each other, rather than passively from a lecture or demonstration by the teacher.

Suggested specific uses: For pre-school, kindergarten, and other early childhood education specialists interested in ways to capitalize on children's natural interests and to build on the knowledge they already possess in helping them to become literate.

"Multicultural Education." Order No. 08560 (purchase); 08561 (rental).

The title of this award-winning video's classroom segment, "The Value of Diversity," provides an excellent description of the entire program. Multiculturalism has historically been viewed as problematic by American educators; however, teachers should recognize that the strength of American society lies in diversity, not in uniformity. Today's culturally pluralistic classrooms can enrich the education of *all* students. Educators must also become more aware that even "mainstream" students bring to school their own kinds of diversity. Individual children possess different kinds of intelligence and have different ways of learning. Students from inner cities know things which children in suburban schools do not, and children of migrant workers possess knowledge which is unknown to both inner-city and suburban students. Teachers should respect and value the knowledge and experience which all students bring to the classroom and should also understand that different students have different ways of taking knowledge away from their classroom experiences.

These principles are effectively portrayed in practice during the "Value of Diversity" segment. Students on a Navajo reservation are shown learning how to compute area for their math class by going outside and measuring off an acre of land. Tribal elders demonstrate the carding and spinning of wool for students, explaining what they are doing and answering students' questions in English or in Navajo, depending on which seems most appropriate. Teachers at this school deliberately and effectively incorporate cultural learning and community involvement into the curriculum on a regular basis.

In a classroom on the California-Mexico border, a bilingual teacher of Mexican-American students first asks questions in English, then switches to Spanish if there is no immediate response. When children respond in Spanish, she writes their responses in Spanish on large sheets of easel paper which every child can see, then rewrites what they have said in English, reading aloud as she writes in both cases. When children respond in English, however "broken," she writes what they say but rephrases their words in "correct" English, again reading aloud as she writes. When a piece of writing on the easel paper is "finished," all the children and the teacher read it aloud together. In another activity called "Superkid,"

individual students are asked to tell the class about themselves in English, while the teacher records what each child says on the easel paper. Afterward, the whole class reads aloud together what the individual has "written." Then other children are asked to tell the class what they have learned about each "Superkid."

Both the Navajo and the Mexican border classrooms emphasize the importance of validating children's own experiences and cultural backgrounds and demonstrating in practical terms that what students bring with them from home is valued in school. Having two languages and two cultures is viewed as an advantage, never as a handicap.

The postscript to the video emphasizes that schools should never do away with students' own cultures in order to instill a "mainstream" culture; rather, they should do everything they can to capitalize on the richness of all the cultures represented by the children in the school.

Suggested specific uses: This video should be required viewing for *all* teachers, pre-service and in-service, in culturally pluralistic and "mainstream" classrooms, because it so powerfully illustrates the need to treat every child as an individual with diverse resources, needs, interests, and learning styles.

"Teachers as Learners." Order No. 08564 (purchase); 08565 (rental).

The focus of this program is change: in curricula, instructional strategies, the ways teachers work with students, and the ways teachers work with each other. Effective changes take place only when teachers work with students on an individual basis and when teachers are able to collaborate with each other, not when changes are dictated from above by administrators or curriculum designers. The key to significant change is active learning, taking students from where they are by assessing each student's potential and developing curriculum and methodology on the basis of observing and learning from students themselves. "Real" curriculum (as opposed to "paper" curriculum which comes from outside the classroom) is the product of interaction with students and reflection on that interaction, both by individual teachers and by teachers working together.

Because teacher isolation inhibits change, teachers must be encouraged to collaborate, sharing their beliefs, their methods, their decisionmaking, and their knowledge of individual students. No teacher has a monopoly on the "right" way to teach; both instruction and learning inevitably vary from teacher to teacher and student to student. This kind of sharing is a growth process because it promotes reflection on how and why one teaches.

The segment entitled "Small Significant Changes" presents teacher consultants in the New York City Writing Project discussing their philosophies and approaches toward teaching in-service courses for other teachers. The Writing Project model is based on respect for the expertise of

teachers as professionals and trust in them as learners. One secret of the Writing Project's success is that it makes on-site facilitators readily available to teachers for ongoing help. These teacher consultants caution, however, that teachers should not expect huge changes that happen fast; small changes over a long period of time are more realistic. They believe that seeing students learn and grow brings about the most effective changes in teachers.

Suggested specific uses: For teachers interested in bringing about change in their schools "from the bottom up" and for those who are curious about the Writing Project model and how it might help them to effect such change.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WRITING

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The National Center for the Study of Writing, one of the national educational research centers sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, is located at the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Berkeley, with a site at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Center provides leadership to elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities as they work to improve the teaching and learning of writing. The Center supports an extensive program of educational research and development in which some of the country's top language and literacy experts work to discover how the teaching and learning of writing can be improved, from the early years of schooling through adulthood. The Center's four major objectives are: (1) to create useful theories for the teaching and learning of writing; (2) to understand more fully the connections between writing and learning; (3) to provide a national focal point for writing research; and (4) to disseminate its results to American educators, policy-makers, and the public. Through its ongoing relationship with the National Writing Project, a network of expert teachers coordinated through Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, the Center involves classroom teachers in helping to shape the Center's research agenda and in making use of findings from the research. Underlying the Center's research effort is the belief that research both must move into the classroom and come from it; thus, the Center supports "practice-sensitive research" for "research-sensitive practice."

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